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The Heart of
Old Virginia
Alice Maud Ewell

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
SUSAN BENNETT SMITH

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THE HEART OF OLD VIRGINIA



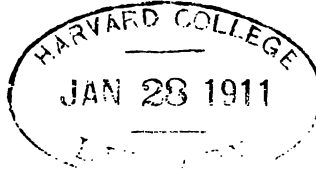


The Heart of Old Virginia
by Alice Maude Ewell

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Sue Berkeley Alrich

New York and Washington
The Neale Publishing Company
- 1907 -

WS 18600.15



*Gift of
James F. Rhodes*

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*To my Mother State,
but especially that part called James City County,
this tribute is offered on the occasion of
her Tercentenary.*

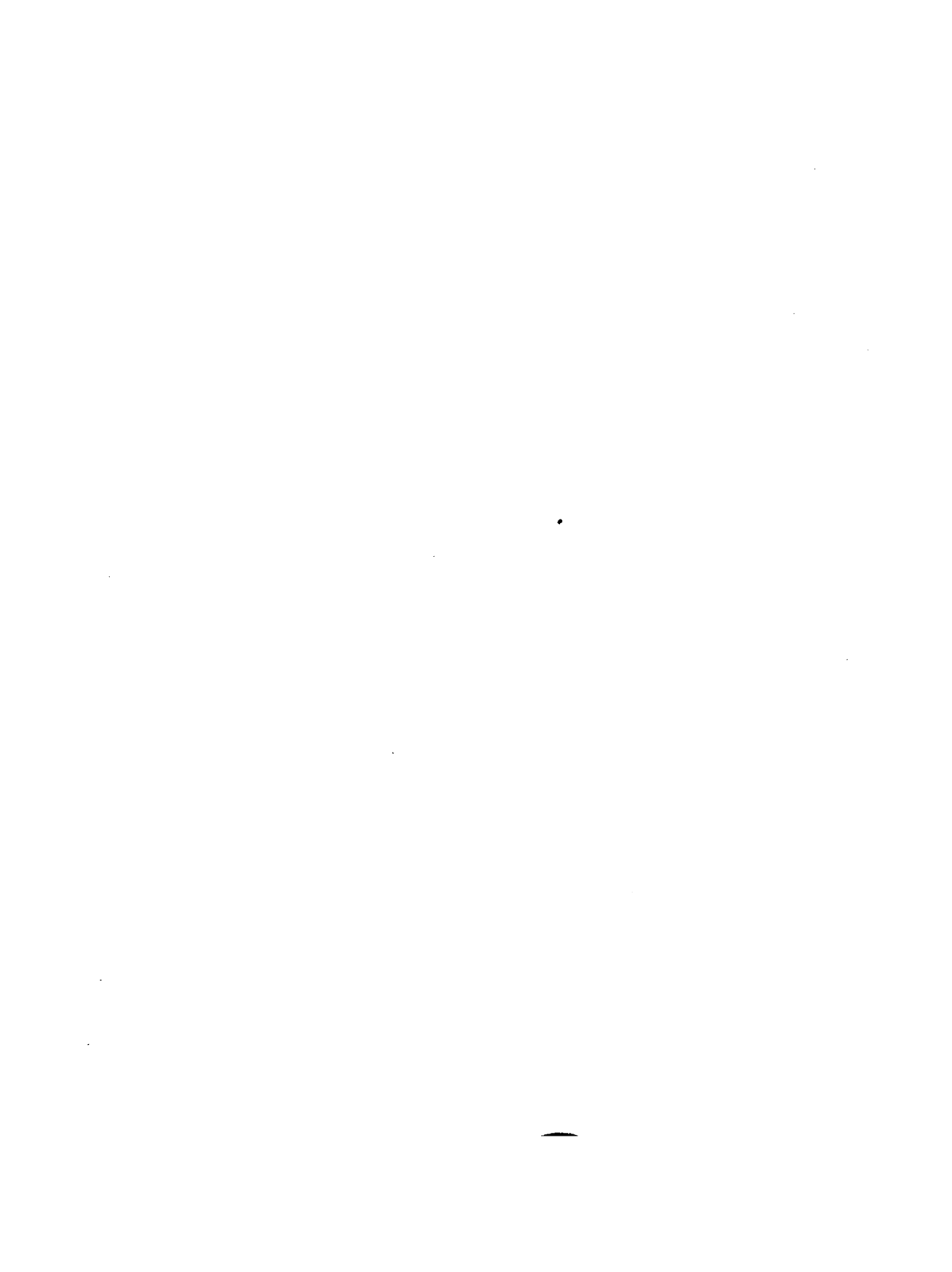
PREFACE

IT is thought by the writer best to state that this poem was not written originally with a view to publication, but as a simple tribute to certain friends of hers in James City County, Virginia, on the occasion of our Tercentenary. Though many names herein mentioned, both those of places and people, have achieved outside fame, they belong emphatically to that neighborhood and must not be understood as representing the whole State. Many others equally honorable and perhaps more distinguished have been left out.

Though no notes would be required by an intelligent dweller in that region, some have been prepared for general circulation, and will be found at the end of the volume. We trust, with their aid, the reader will find no difficulty.

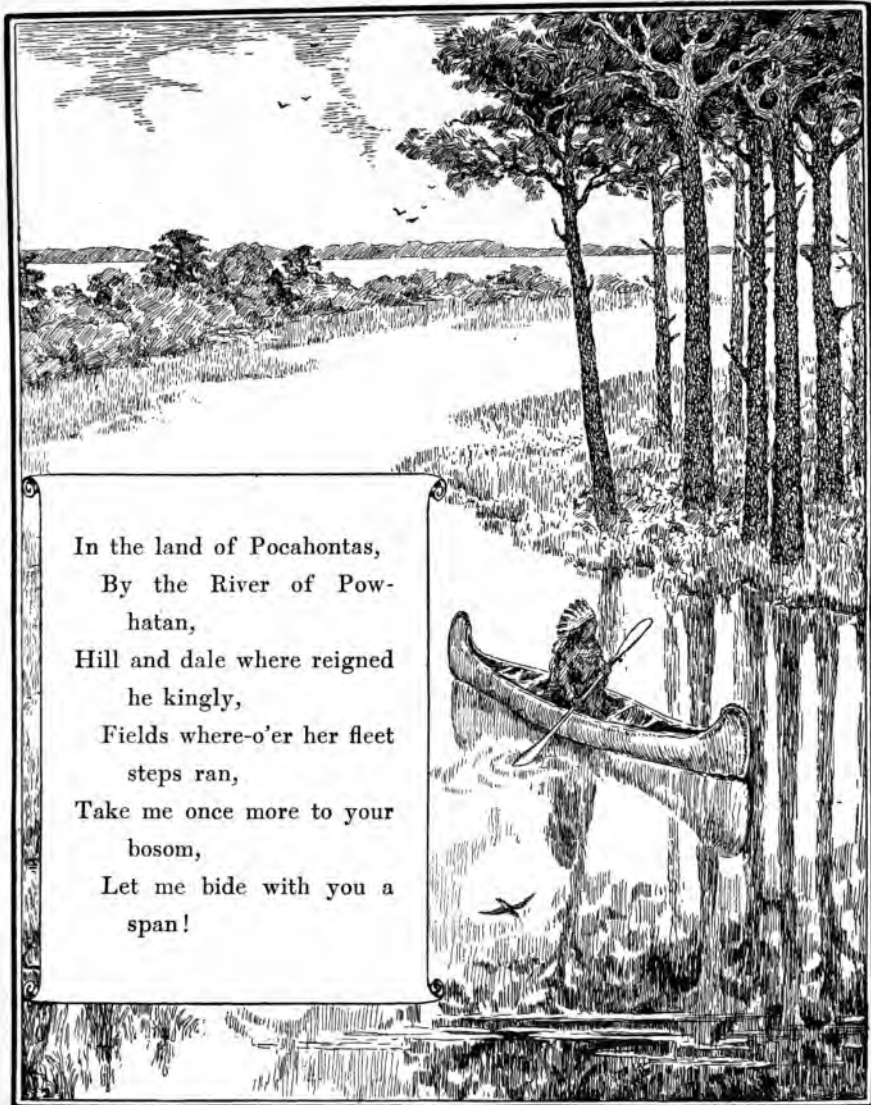
ALICE MAUDE EWELL.

June, 1907.



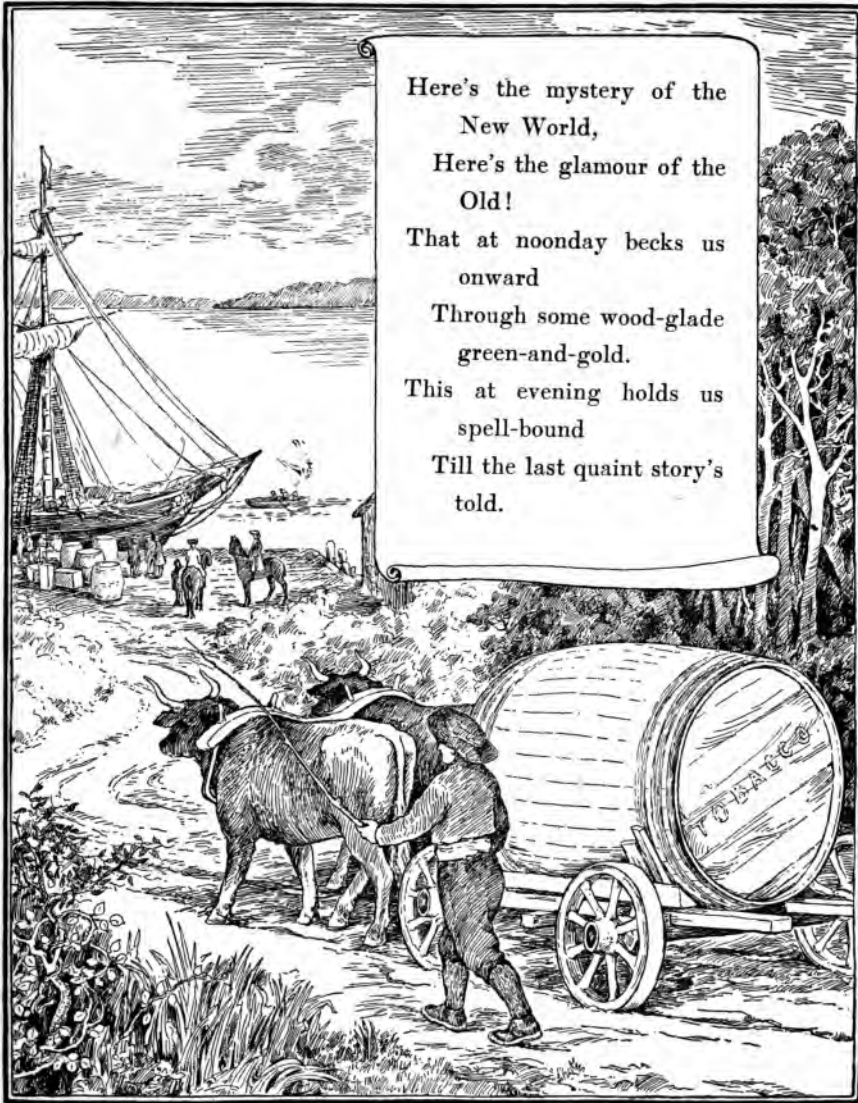
THE HEART OF OLD VIRGINIA





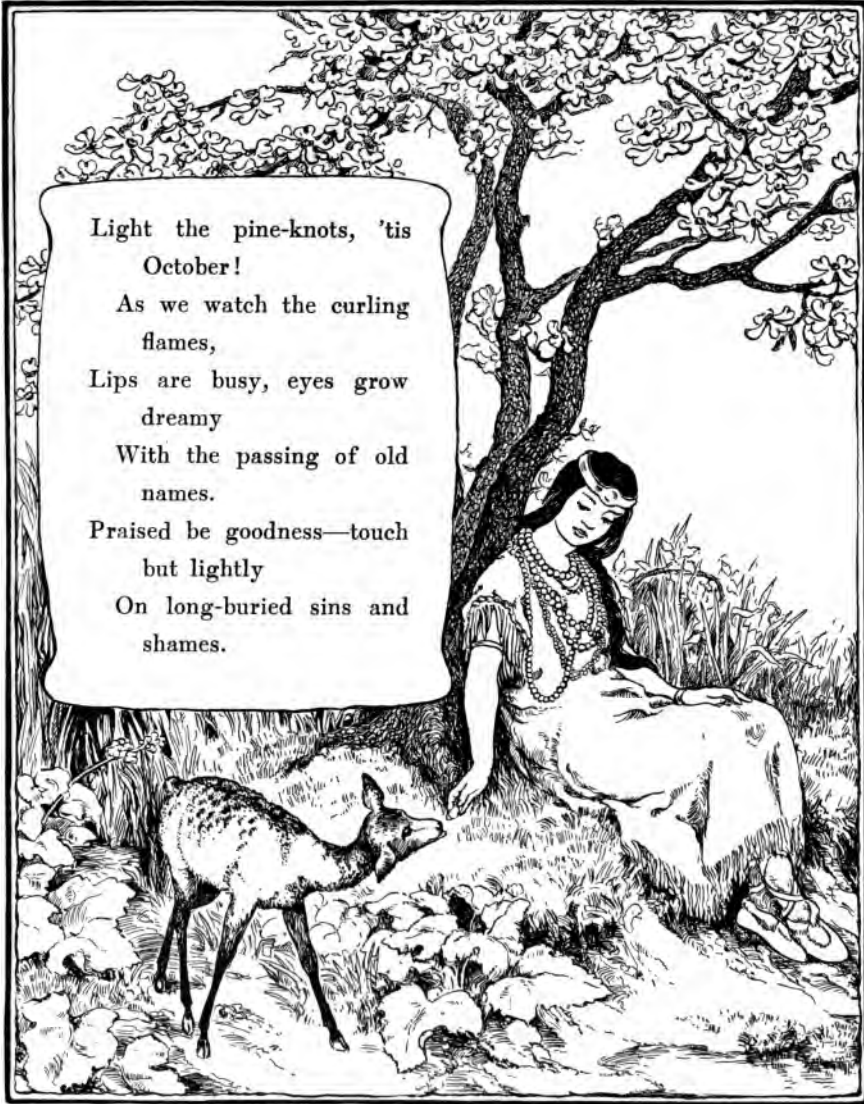
In the land of Pocahontas,
By the River of Pow-
hatan,
Hill and dale where reigned
he kingly,
Fields where-o'er her fleet
steps ran,
Take me once more to your
bosom,
Let me bide with you a
span!

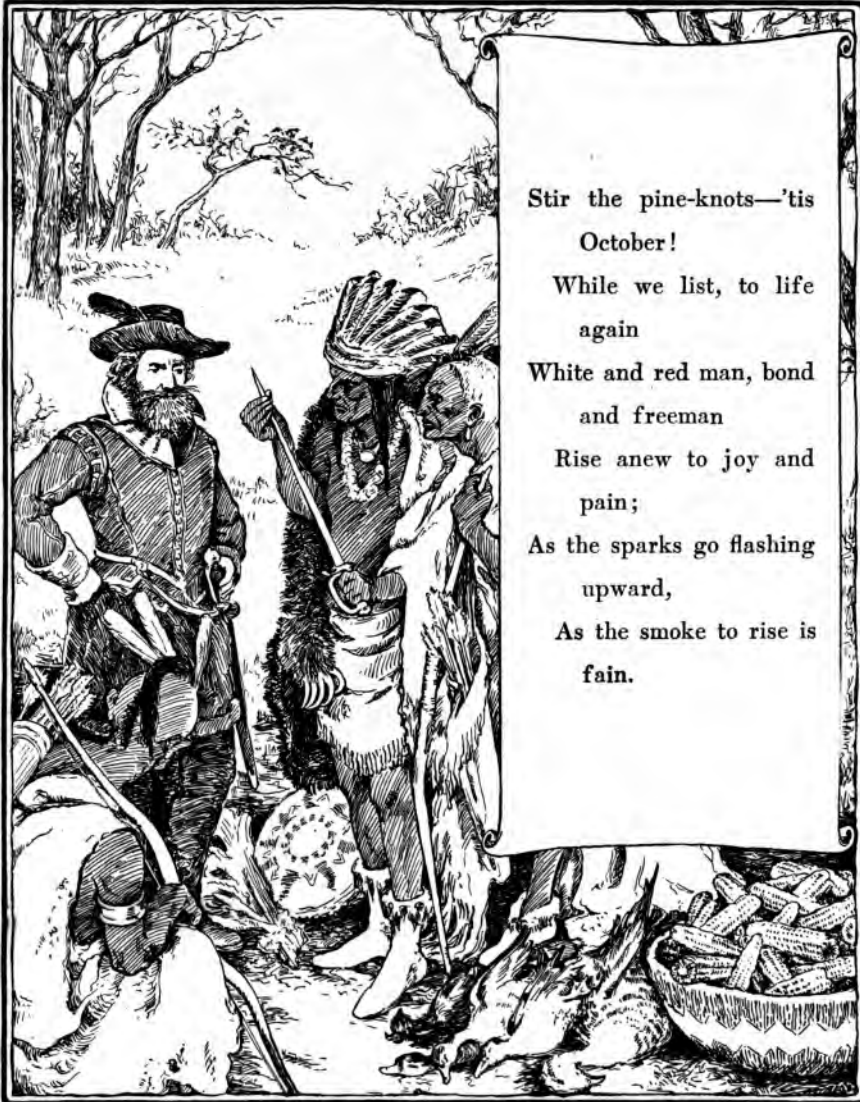
Here's the mystery of the
New World,
Here's the glamour of the
Old!
That at noonday beckons us
onward
Through some wood-glade
green-and-gold.
This at evening holds us
spell-bound
Till the last quaint story's
told.





Light the pine-knots, 'tis
October!
As we watch the curling
flames,
Lips are busy, eyes grow
dreamy
With the passing of old
names.
Praised be goodness—touch
but lightly
On long-buried sins and
shames.





Stir the pine-knots—'tis
October!

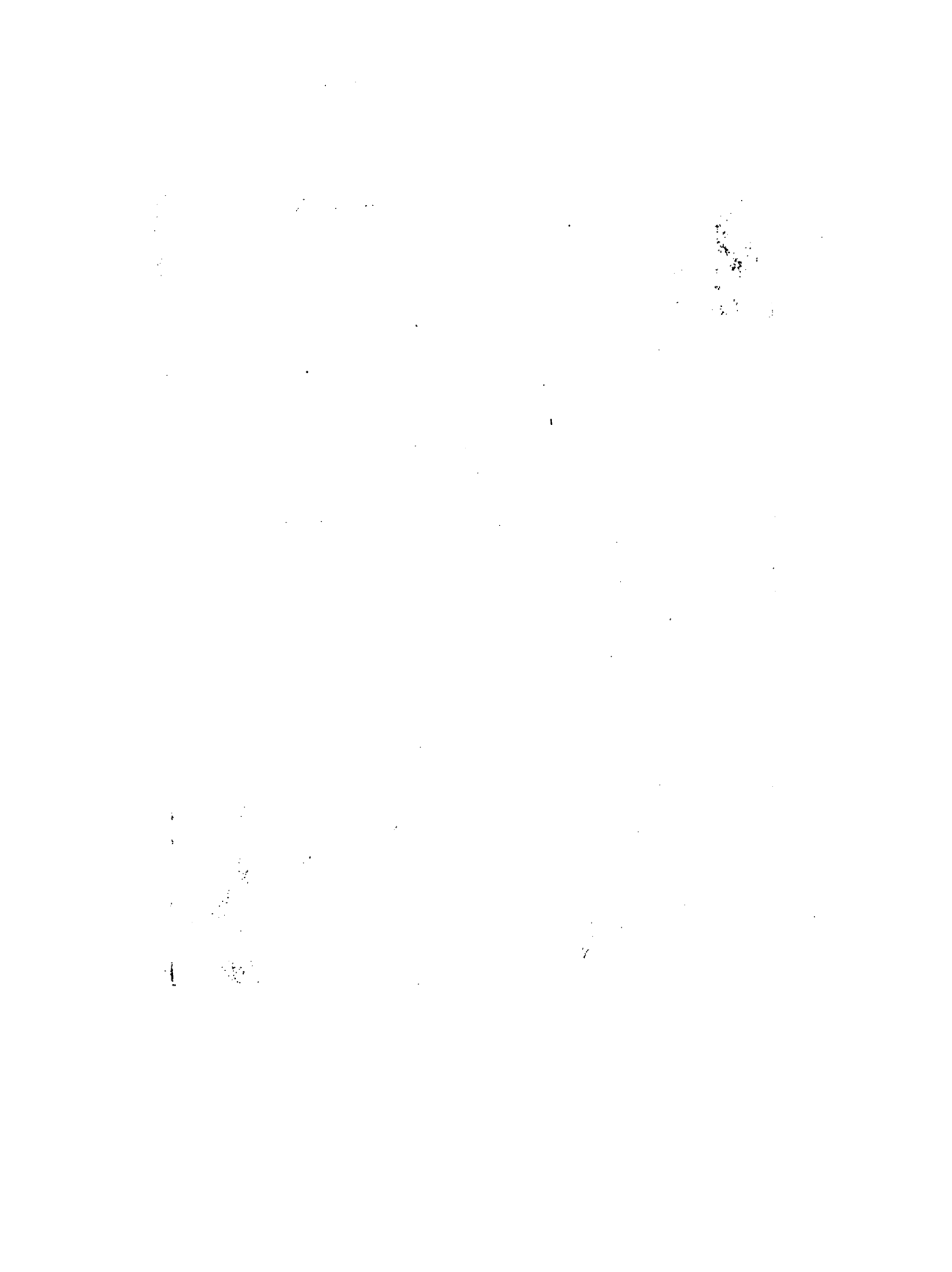
While we list, to life
again

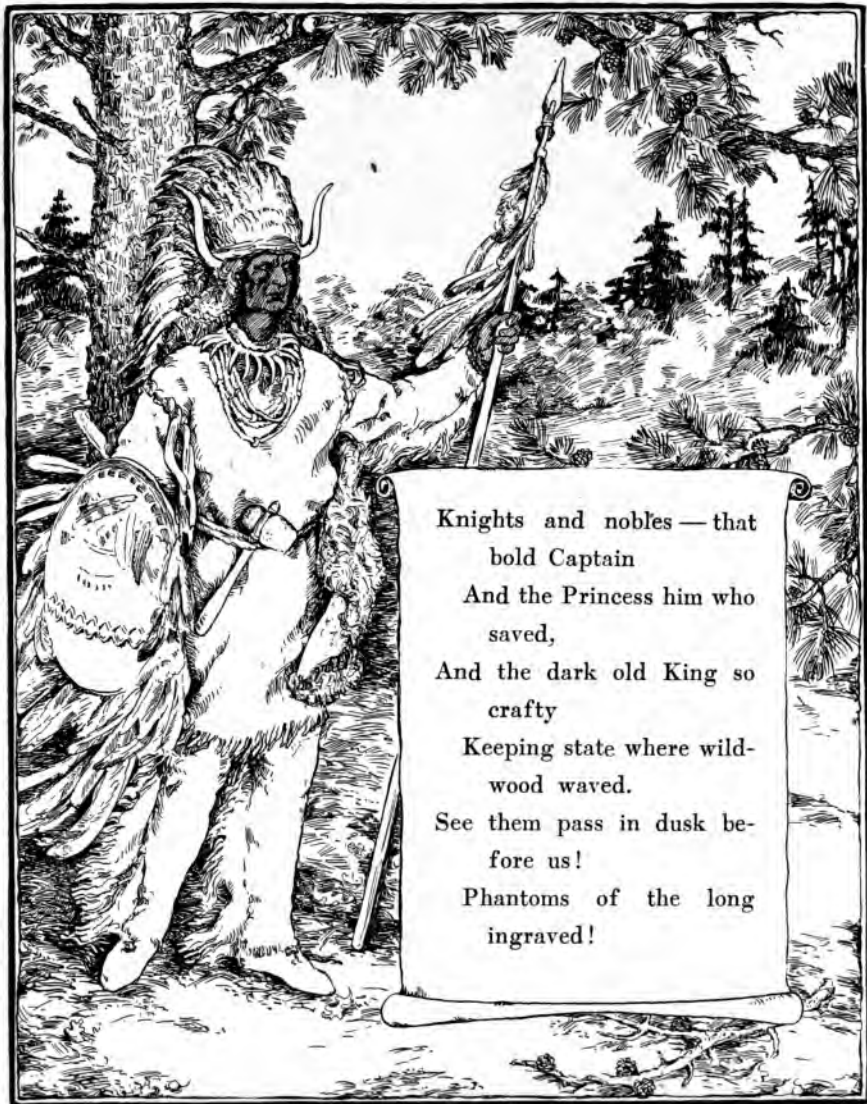
White and red man, bond
and freeman

Rise anew to joy and
pain;

As the sparks go flashing
upward,

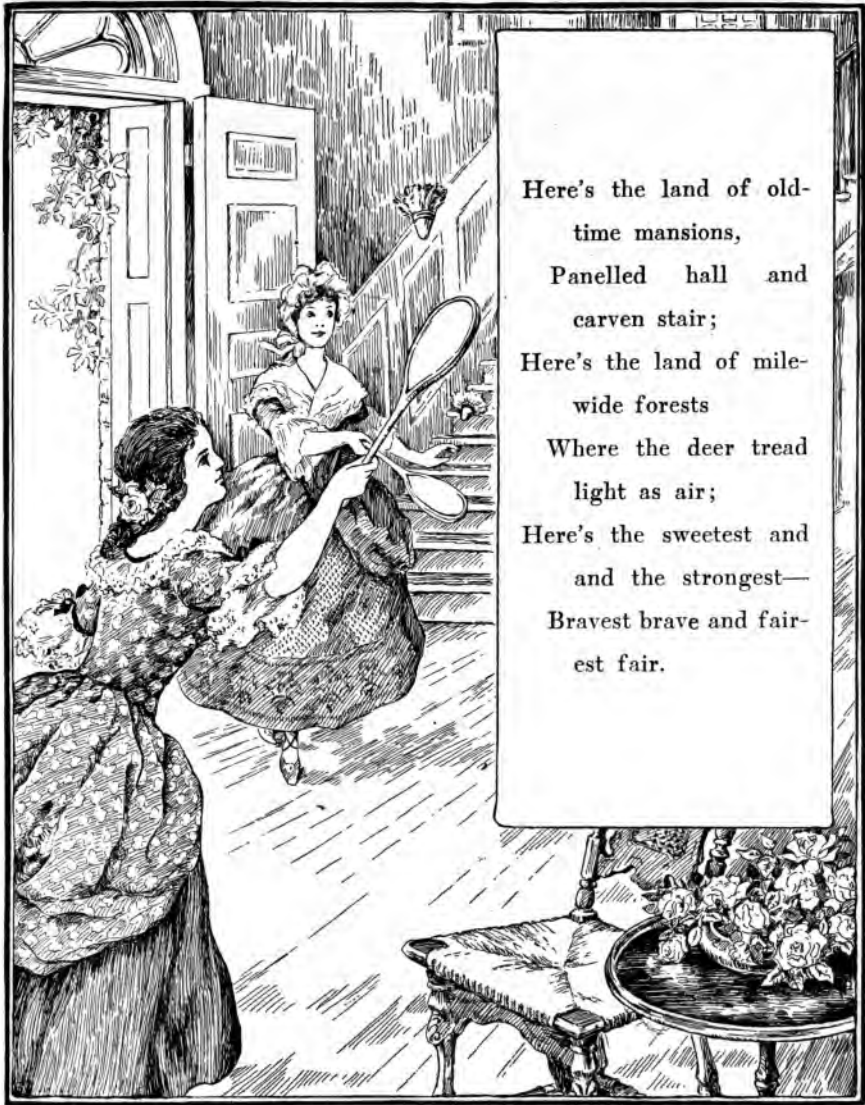
As the smoke to rise is
fain.





Knights and nobles — that
bold Captain
And the Princess him who
saved,
And the dark old King so
crafty
Keeping state where wild-
wood waved.
See them pass in dusk be-
fore us!
Phantoms of the long
ingraved!





Here's the land of old-
time mansions,
Panelled hall and
carven stair;
Here's the land of mile-
wide forests
Where the deer tread
light as air;
Here's the sweetest and
and the strongest—
Bravest brave and fair-
est fair.





Quaint the olden names
and stately—

“James Town,” “York
Town,” and “Green
Spring”;

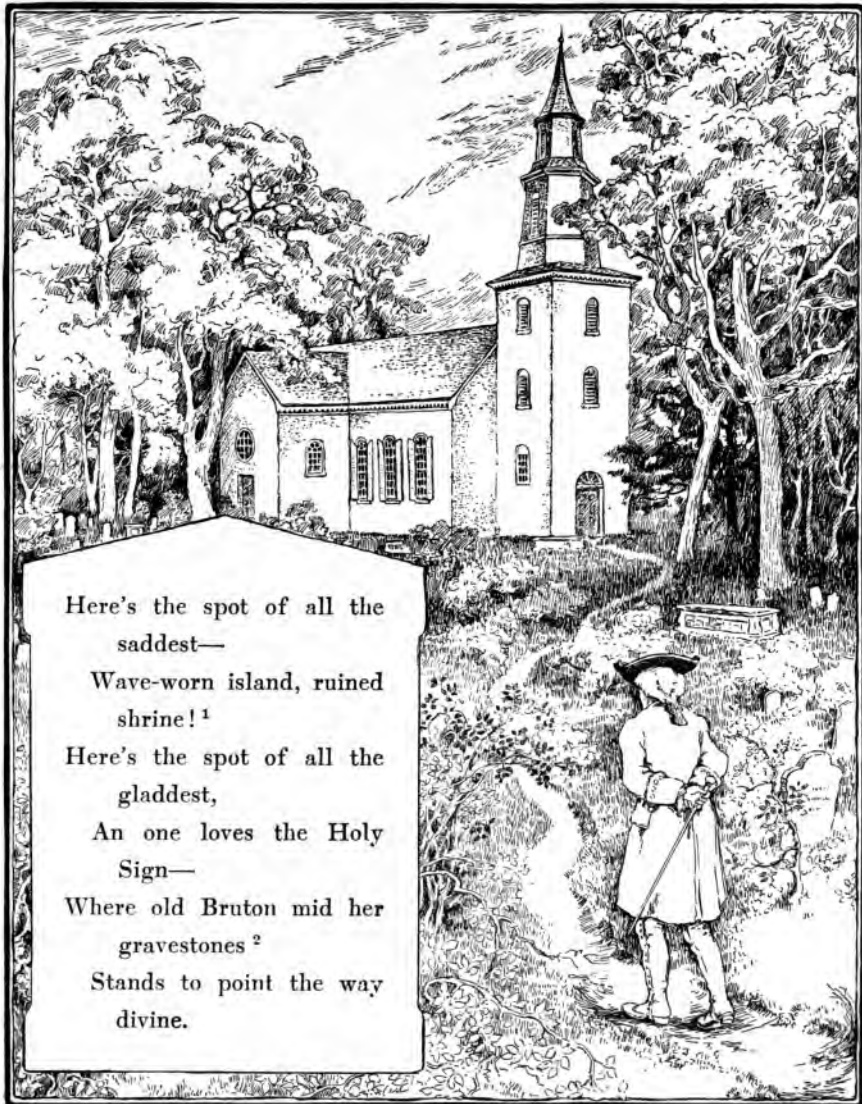
“Archer’s Hope,” the
“Main Plantation.”

Homely-sweet each one
doth ring.

“Ringfield,” “Bellfield,”
“Porto Bello,”

How to heart and ear
they cling!





Here's the spot of all the
saddest—

Wave-worn island, ruined
shrine! ¹

Here's the spot of all the
gladdest,

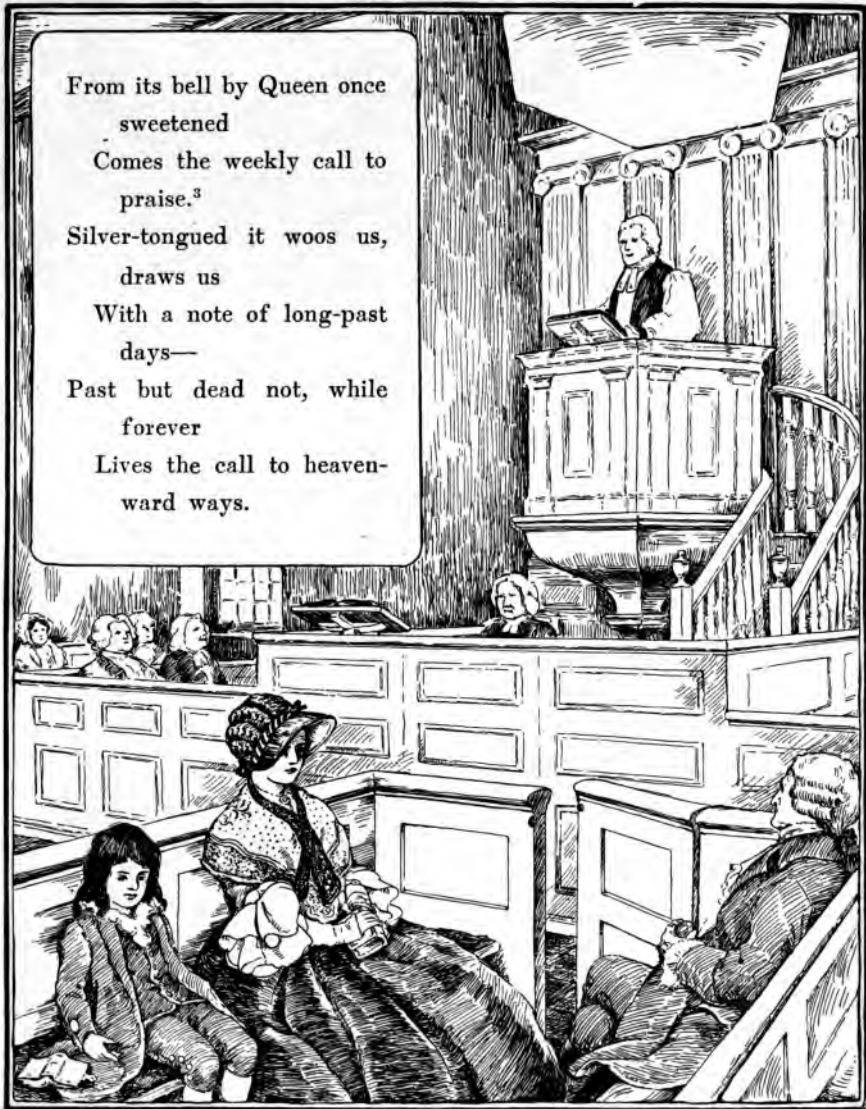
An one loves the Holy
Sign—

Where old Bruton mid her
gravestones ²

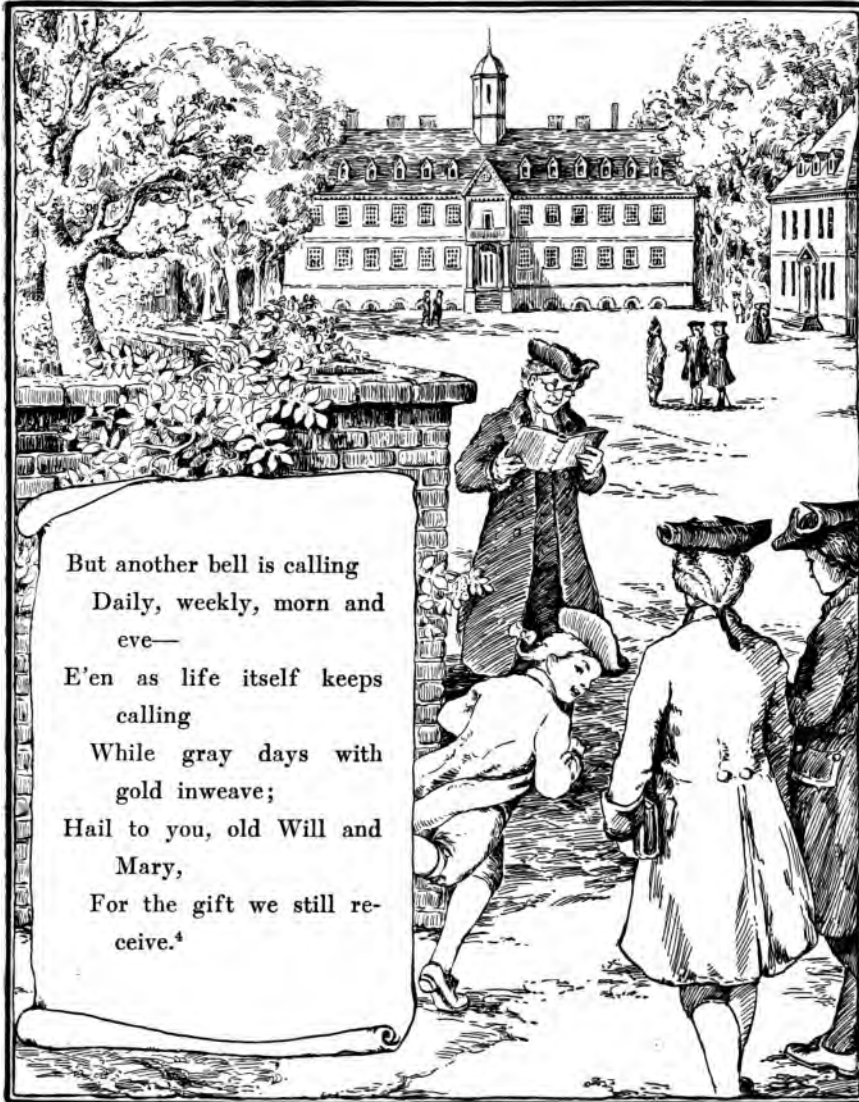
Stands to point the way
divine.



From its bell by Queen once
sweetened
Comes the weekly call to
praise.³
Silver-tongued it woos us,
draws us
With a note of long-past
days—
Past but dead not, while
forever
Lives the call to heaven-
ward ways.

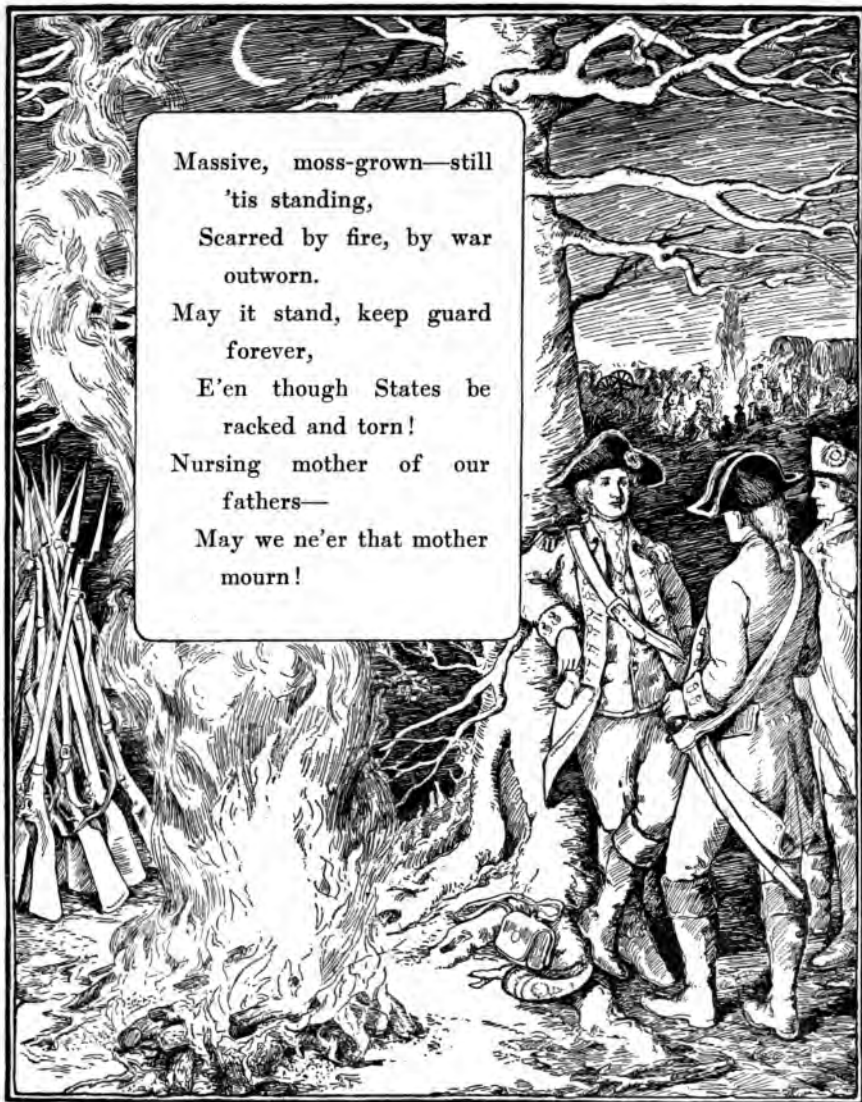




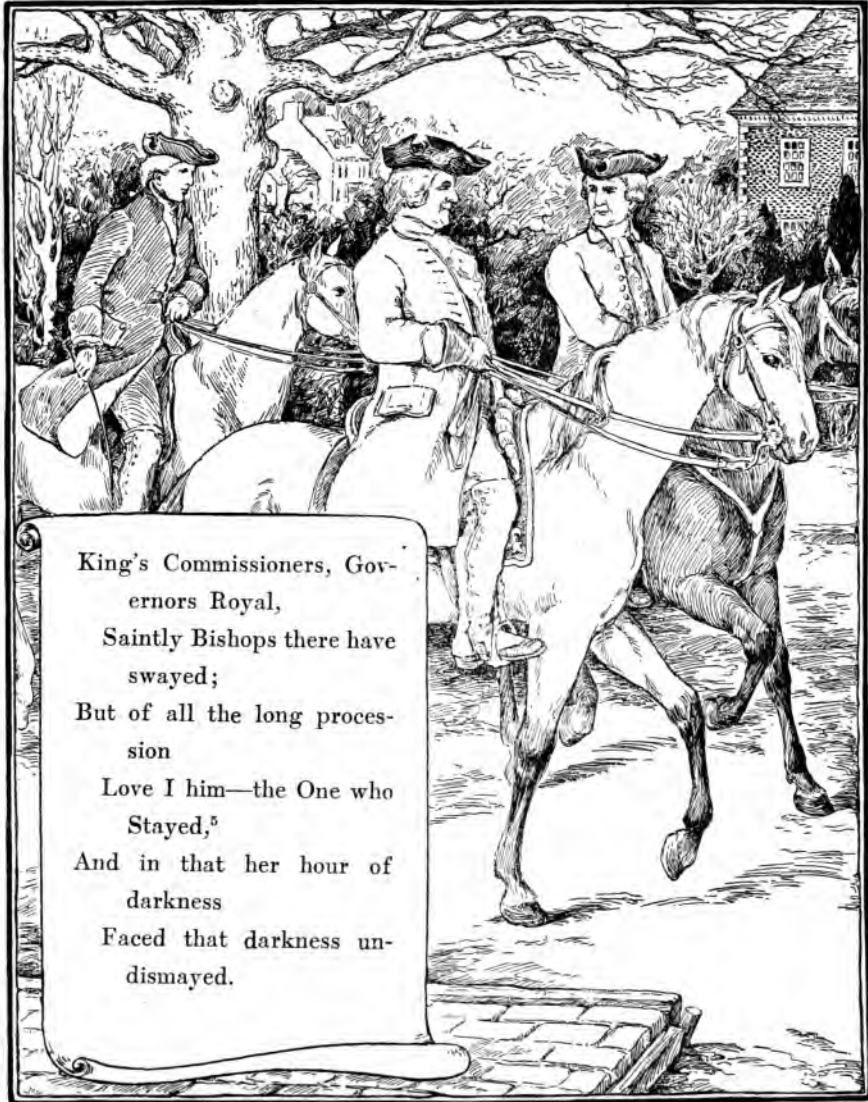


But another bell is calling
Daily, weekly, morn and
eve—
E'en as life itself keeps
calling
While gray days with
gold inweave;
Hail to you, old Will and
Mary,
For the gift we still re-
ceive.⁴

Massive, moss-grown—still
'tis standing,
Scarred by fire, by war
outworn.
May it stand, keep guard
forever,
E'en though States be
racked and torn!
Nursing mother of our
fathers—
May we ne'er that mother
mourn!

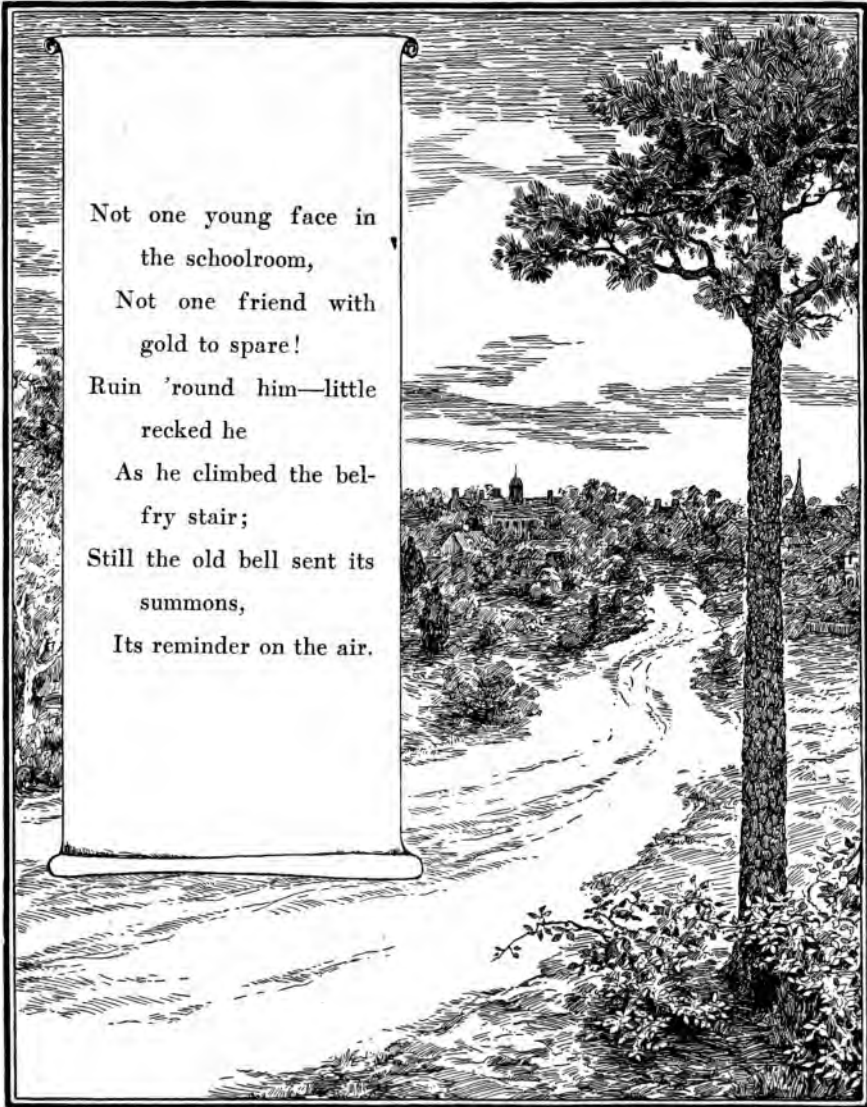


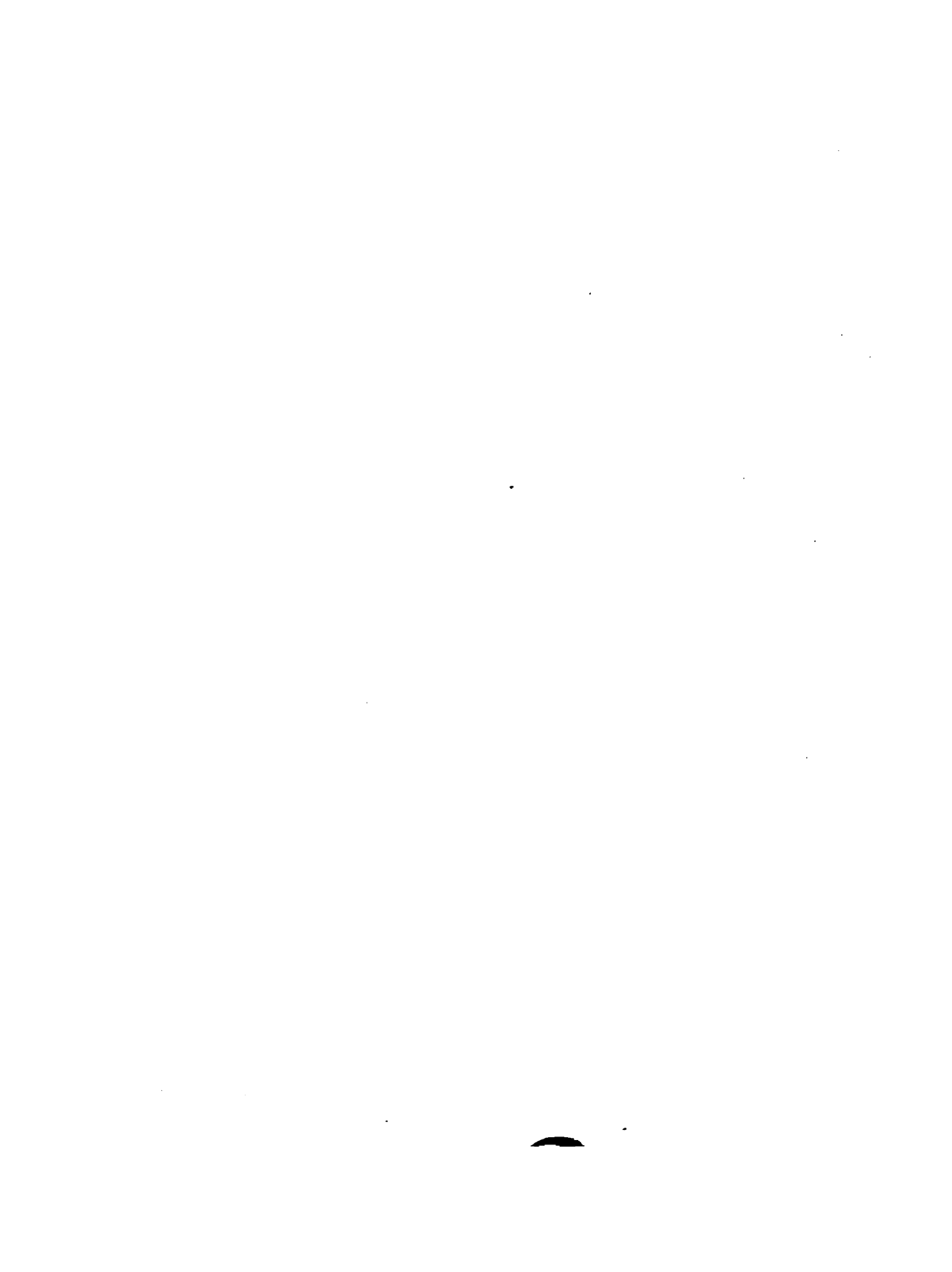


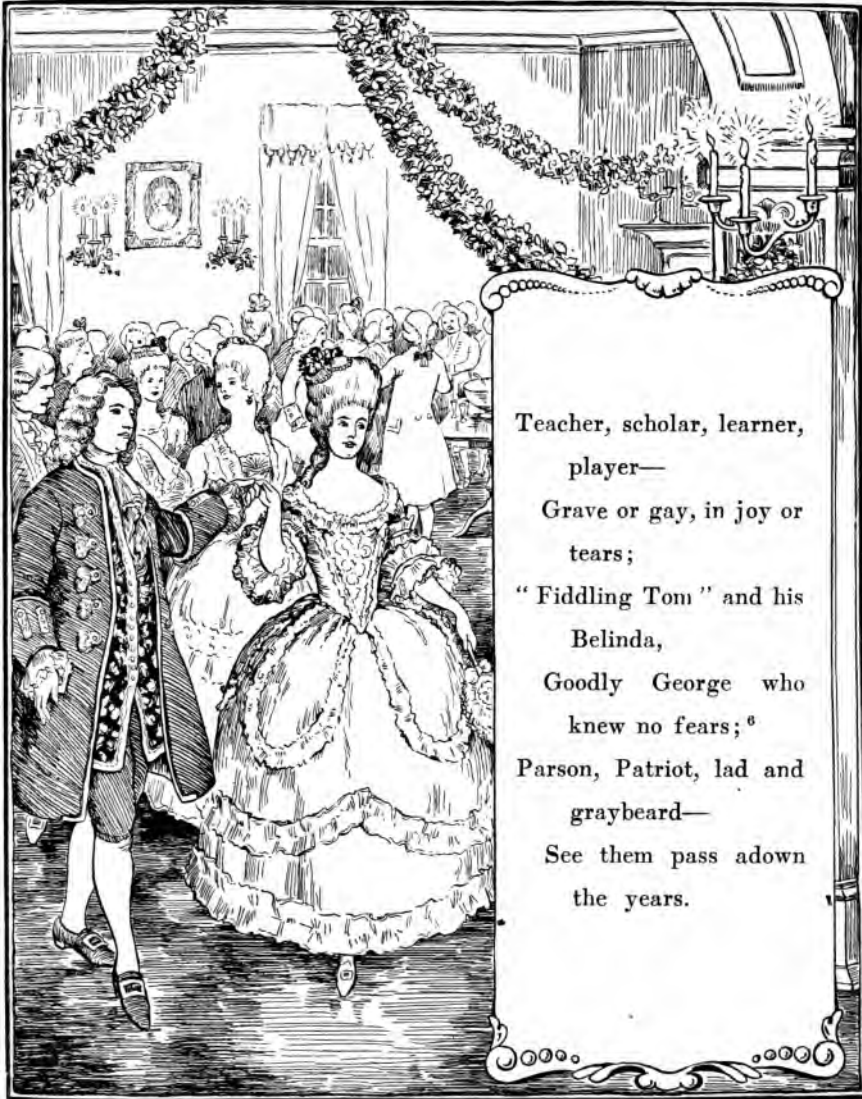


King's Commissioners, Govern-
ors Royal,
Saintly Bishops there have
swayed;
But of all the long proces-
sion
Love I him—the One who
Stayed,⁵
And in that her hour of
darkness
Faced that darkness un-
dismayed.

Not one young face in
the schoolroom,
Not one friend with
gold to spare!
Ruin 'round him—little
recked he
As he climbed the bel-
fry stair;
Still the old bell sent its
summons,
Its reminder on the air.

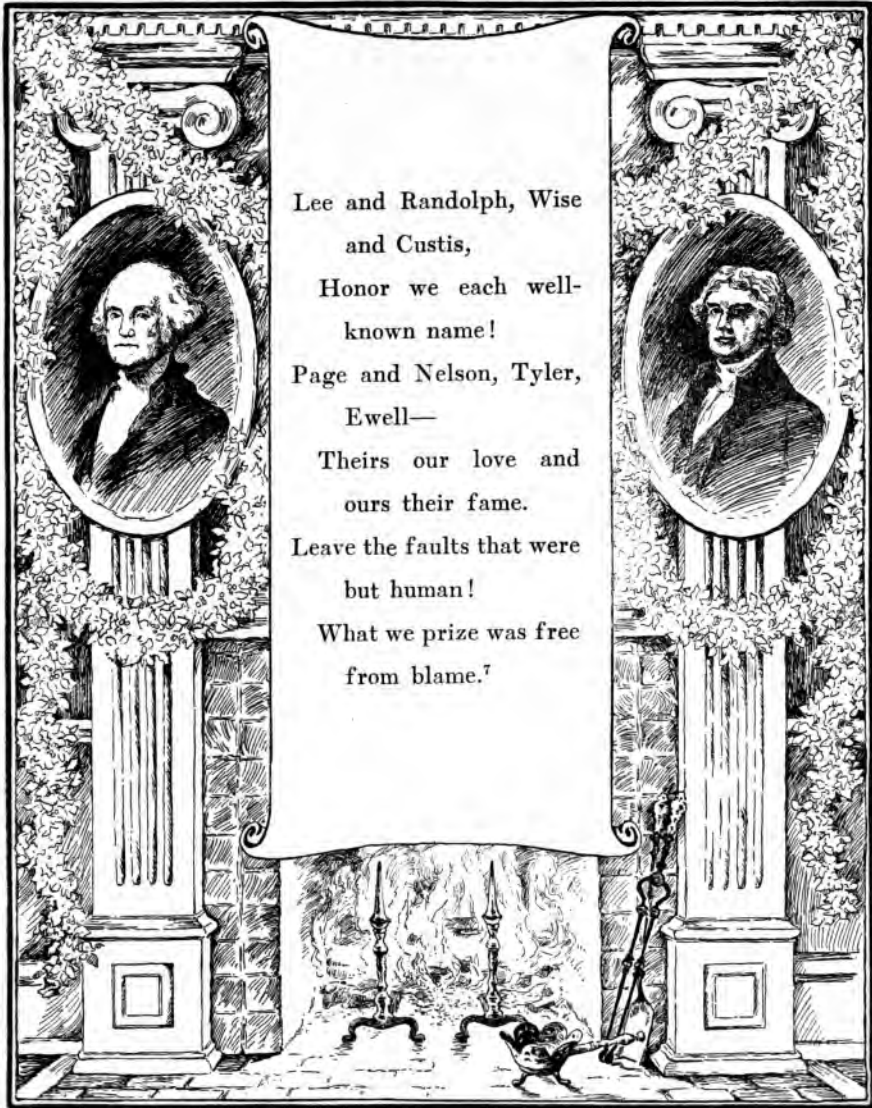






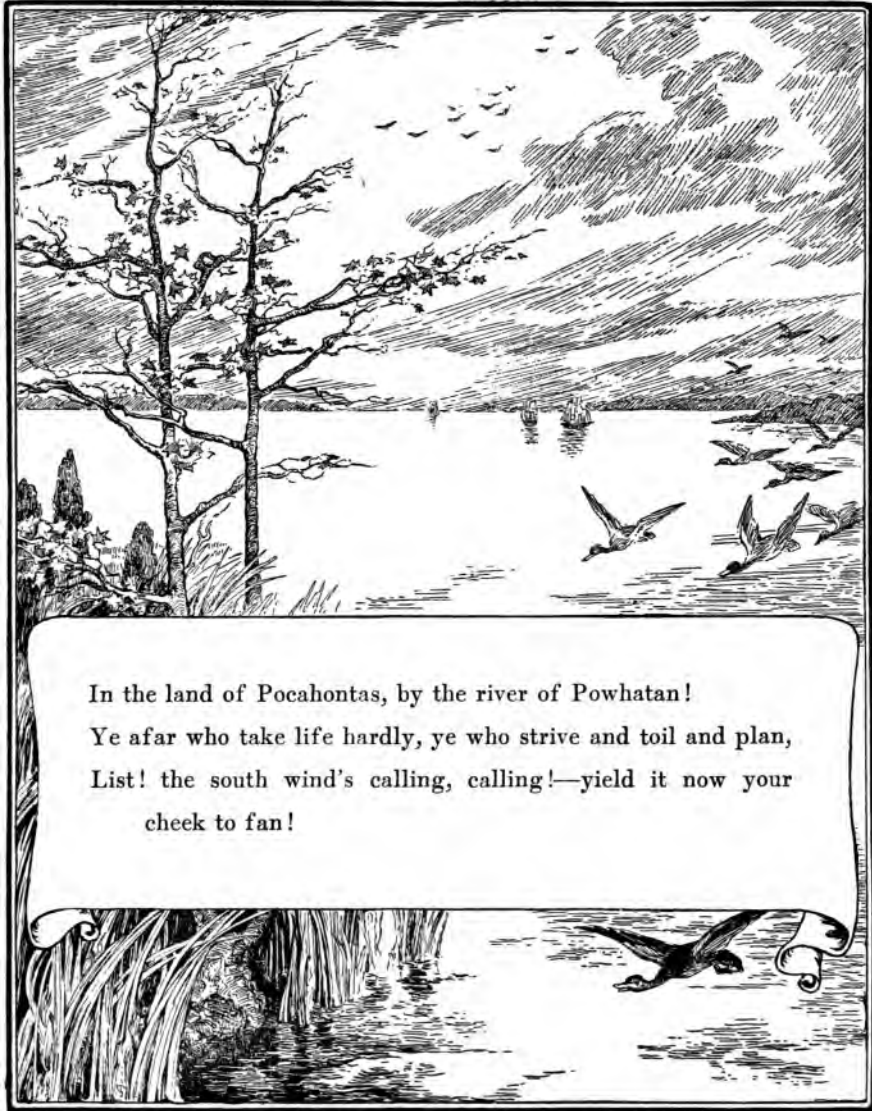
Teacher, scholar, learner,
player—
Grave or gay, in joy or
tears;
“ Fiddling Tom ” and his
Belinda,
Goodly George who
knew no fears;⁶
Parson, Patriot, lad and
graybeard—
See them pass adown
the years.



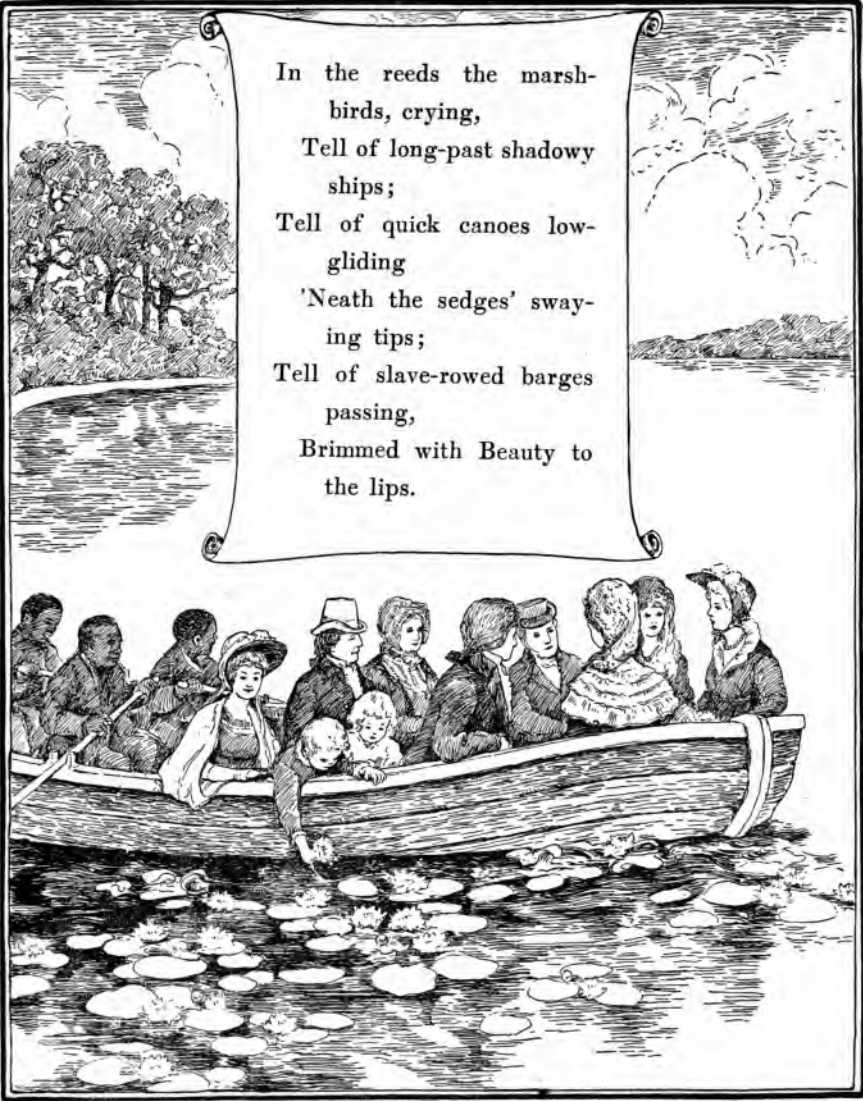


Lee and Randolph, Wise
and Custis,
Honor we each well-
known name!
Page and Nelson, Tyler,
Ewell—
Theirs our love and
ours their fame.
Leave the faults that were
but human!
What we prize was free
from blame.7



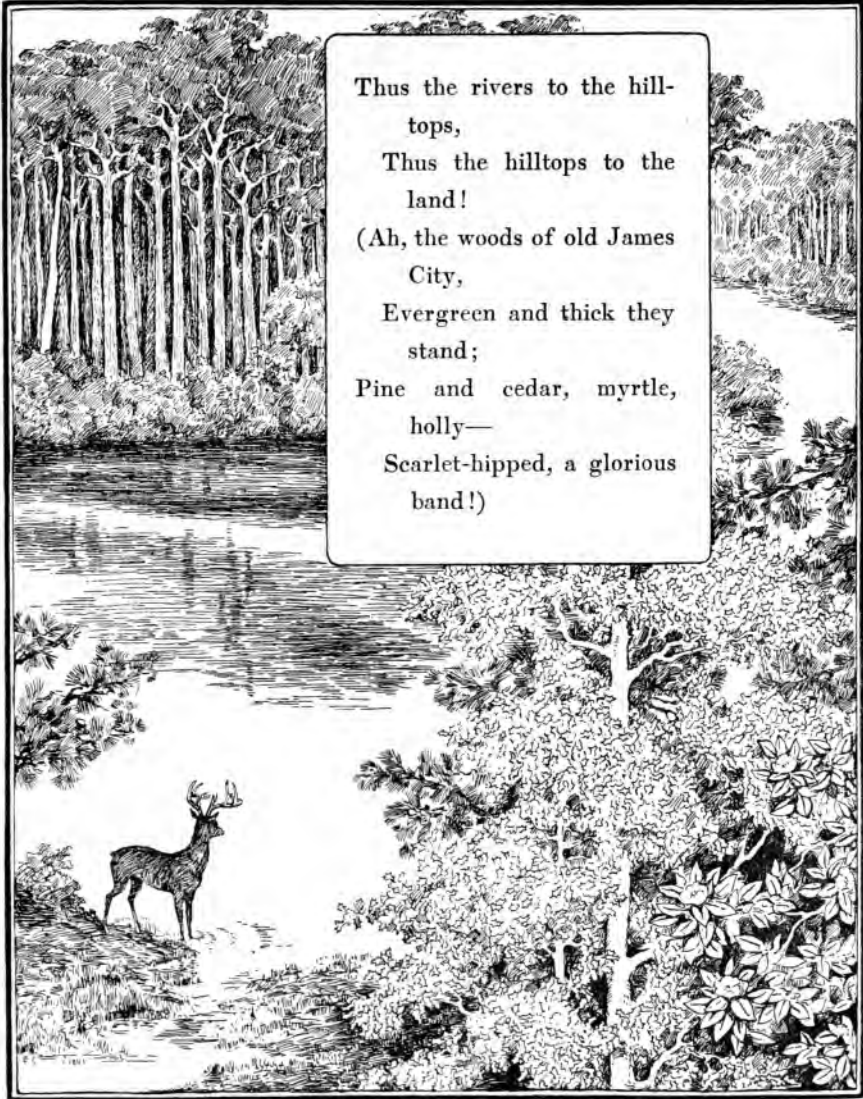


In the land of Pocahontas, by the river of Powhatan!
Ye afar who take life hardly, ye who strive and toil and plan,
List! the south wind's calling, calling!—yield it now your
cheek to fan!



In the reeds the marsh-
birds, crying,
Tell of long-past shadowy
ships;
Tell of quick canoes low-
gliding
'Neath the sedges' sway-
ing tips;
Tell of slave-rowed barges
passing,
Brimmed with Beauty to
the lips.





Thus the rivers to the hill-
tops,

Thus the hilltops to the
land!

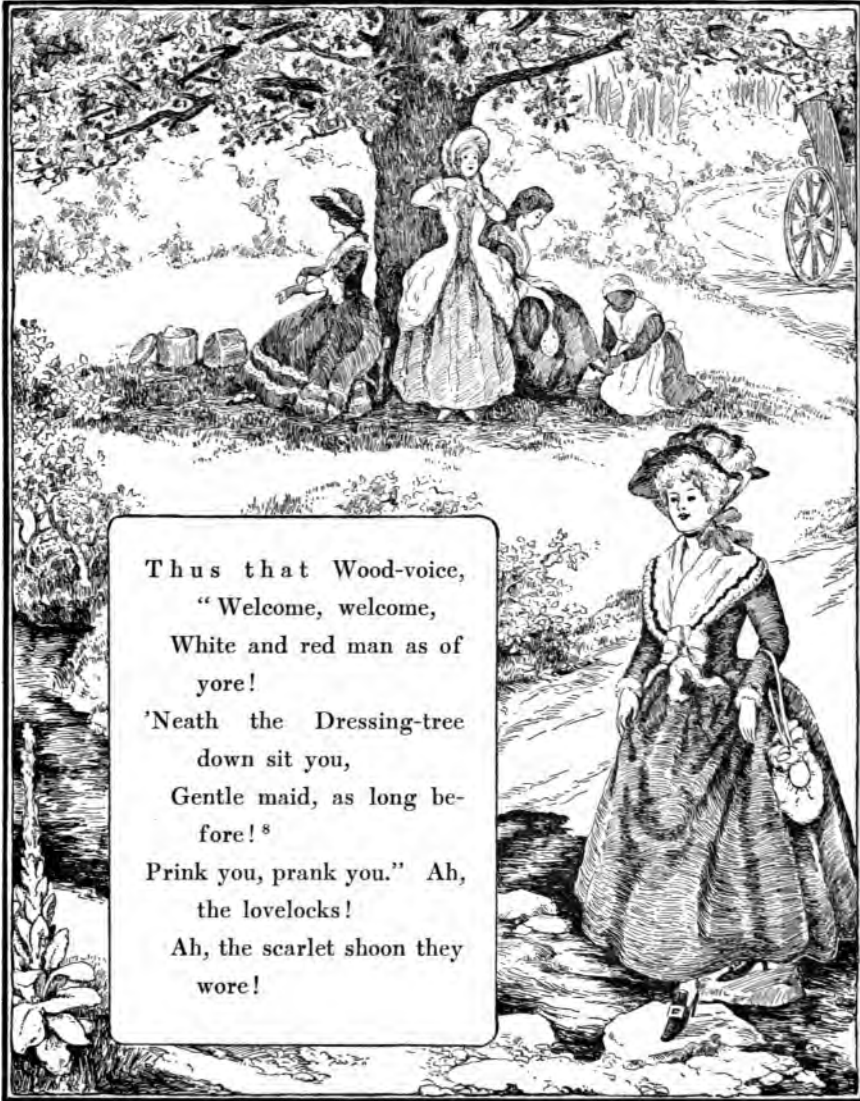
(Ah, the woods of old James
City,

Evergreen and thick they
stand;

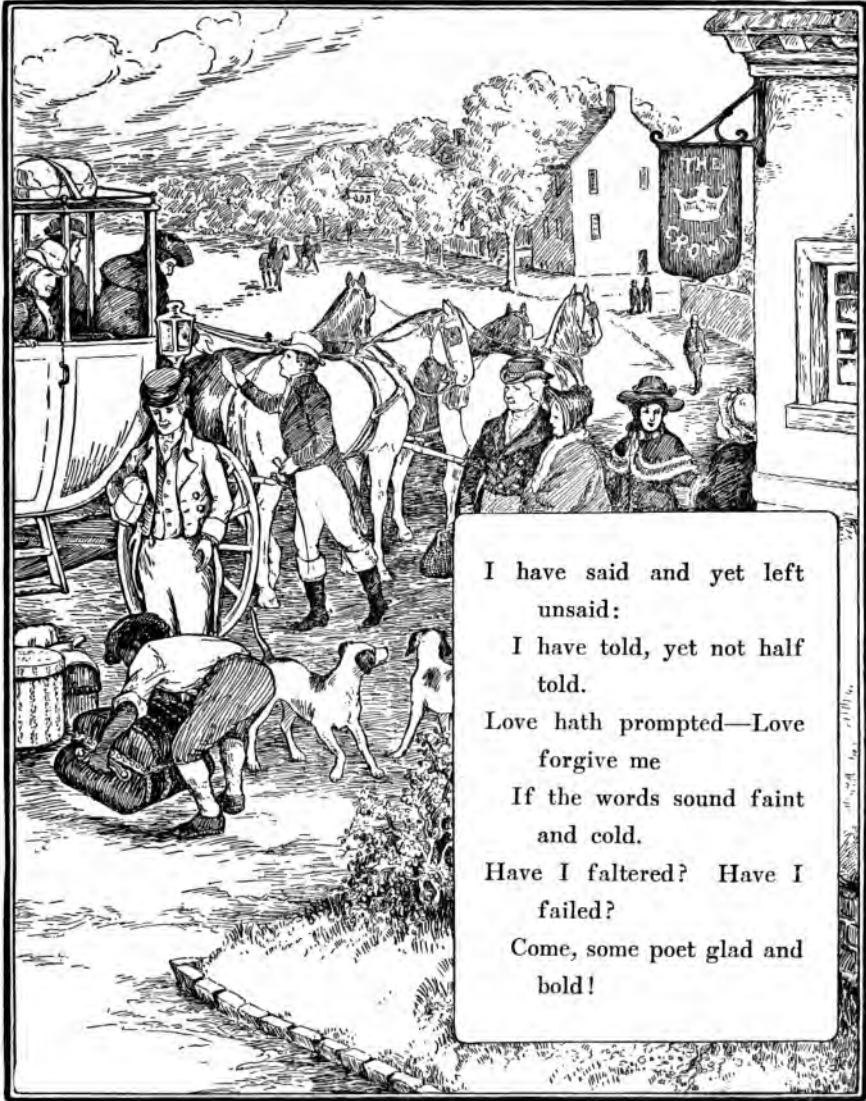
Pine and cedar, myrtle,
holly—

Scarlet-hipped, a glorious
band!)





Thus that Wood-voice,
"Welcome, welcome,
White and red man as of
yore!
'Neath the Dressing-tree
down sit you,
Gentle maid, as long be-
fore!"
Prink you, prank you." Ah,
the lovelocks!
Ah, the scarlet shoon they
wore!



I have said and yet left
unsaid:
I have told, yet not half
told.
Love hath prompted—Love
forgive me
If the words sound faint
and cold.
Have I faltered? Have I
failed?
Come, some poet glad and
bold!

NOTES

- ¹ "Wave-worn island, ruined shrine!"

Jamestown Island, with its ruined church-tower.

- ² "Where old Bruton mid her gravestones
Stands to point the way divine."

Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, the successor to Jamestown. It stands surrounded by not only the tombs of those buried in its churchyard, but many stones have been brought from outlying plantations and are ranged against the walls. A vestibule is also lined with them.

- ³ "From its bell by Queen once sweetened
Comes the weekly call to praise."

It is said that Queen Anne threw a piece of silver into the melting-pot when Bruton church-bell was casting, thus imparting a peculiarly sweet tone.

- ⁴ "Hail to you, old Will and Mary,
For the gift we still receive!"

The College of William and Mary, founded by Mary Stuart and William of Orange, was the first chartered institution of learning in the New World, though Harvard claims precedence in actual working order.



NOTES

- ⁵ "The One who Stayed," etc.

Col. Benjamin Ewell, long President of William and Mary, who, when that College was closed after the Civil War, rang the bell night and morning with his own hand, thus keeping interest alive.

- ⁶ "Fiddling Tom and his Belinda,
Goodly George who knew no fears."

Thomas Jefferson, a student of the College in its palmyest days, and George Washington, its first Chancellor after the Revolution.

- ⁷ "Lee and Randolph, Wise and Custis," etc.

Names prominently connected in some way with William and Mary.

- ⁸ "'Neath the Dressing-tree down sit you,
Gentle maid as long before."

The Dressing-tree is a very old and large holly-tree just outside of Williamsburg under which the country-folk used to change shoes and stockings and don their finery before going into the town.





